

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
AIR FORCE BOARD FOR CORRECTION OF MILITARY RECORDS

FEB 12 1999

IN THE MATTER OF:

DOCKET NUMBER: 97-02750

COUNSEL: [REDACTED]

HEARING DESIRED: NO

APPLICANT REQUESTS THAT:

He be awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC).

APPLICANT CONTENDS THAT:

It is unjust to arbitrarily deny issuing the DFC which he earned based upon the completion of 25 combat missions.

The applicant states that at the time he was recommended for the DFC, it had been a very worthy tradition that crew members who completed 25 combat missions, were awarded the DFC. The decision to deny the award recommendation could have been an oversight and he should be given the benefit of the doubt.

In support of the appeal, applicant submits a copy of the DFC recommendation and proposed citation.

The applicant's complete submission is attached at Exhibit A.

STATEMENT OF FACTS:

On 2 August 1945, while serving as a 1st Lieutenant in the Army Air Corps, the applicant was recommended for award of the DFC for extraordinary achievement while participating as a navigator in a group daylight low level attack against the strongly fortified enemy stronghold of Iwo Jima on 17 February 1945.

On 9 August 1945, the DFC recommendation was approved by the 11th Bombardment Group Commander and forwarded to the 7th Bomber Command.

The 7th Bomber Command Commander approved the DFC recommendation on 14 August 1945, and forwarded it to the final approval authority, 7th Air Force.

On 26 September 1945, the 7th Air Force Assistant Adjutant General did not favorably consider the DFC recommendation.

The applicant completed a total of 28 combat missions.

During World War 11, the 7th Air Force had a policy of awarding the DFC for completion of 25 combat missions.

AIR FORCE EVALUATION:

The Recognition Programs Branch, AFPC/DPPRA, reviewed this application and states that there is no indication in the applicant's records of the DFC recommendation. There is also no indication he ever attempted requesting reconsideration of that particular recommendation. Although the applicant provided a written recommendation for award of the DFC for a specific mission which occurred on 17 February 1945, in his application he requests award of the DFC for completion of 25 combat missions. If the applicant is requesting reconsideration of the written DFC recommendation, he has not provided any documentation or statements from personnel with first-hand knowledge of the event or disapproval. If he is requesting award of the DFC for completion of 25 combat missions, he has not provided a copy of a written recommendation which was processed through administrative channels. Therefore, they recommend denial of his request.

A complete copy of the Air Force evaluation is attached at Exhibit C.

APPLICANT'S REVIEW OF AIR FORCE EVALUATION:

The applicant reviewed the Air Force evaluation and states that at the time the written DFC recommendation was submitted, he had completed 26 missions. The recommendation would not have been submitted in the first place if the Commanding Officers directly involved had not considered it worthy. The applicant also requests that the other crew members be considered for the DFC.

The counsel's complete response is attached at Exhibit E.

THE BOARD CONCLUDES THAT:

1. The applicant has exhausted all remedies provided by existing law or regulations.
2. The application was not timely filed; however, it is in the interest of justice to excuse the failure to timely file.
3. Sufficient relevant evidence has been presented to demonstrate the existence of probable error or injustice. After thoroughly reviewing the evidence of record, we believe the applicant has been the victim of an error or injustice. The applicant contends that at the time he was recommended for the

DFC, it was tradition that crew members who completed 25 combat missions were awarded the DFC. The applicant is correct that during World War II, the 7th Air Force had a policy of awarding the DFC for completion of 25 combat missions; however, the DFC recommendation was submitted based on extraordinary achievement, rather than the completion of 25 missions. Regardless, we believe the extraordinary achievements of the applicant while participating in the first low level attack by heavy bombers against the strongly fortified enemy stronghold of Iwo Jima on 17 February 1945, met the criteria for award of the DFC. Therefore, we recommend his records be corrected to the extent indicated below. Applicant has requested that the other crew members also be awarded the DFC; however, these individuals are required by Air Force Instruction to submit applications to the Board, Upon receipt of the applications, their requests will be processed in accordance with established policy.

THE BOARD RECOMMENDS THAT:

The pertinent military records of the Department of the Air Force relating to APPLICANT, be corrected to show that he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for extraordinary achievement while participating as a Navigator in a group daylight low level attack against the strongly fortified enemy stronghold of Iwo Jima on 17 February 1945,

The following members of the Board considered this application in Executive Session on 29 October 1998, under the provisions of AFI 36-2603:

Mr. Vaughn E. Schlunz, Panel Chair
Mr. Loren S. Perlstein, Member
Mr. Terry Yonkers, Member
Mr. Phillip E. Horton, Examiner (without vote)

All members voted to correct the records, as recommended. The following documentary evidence was considered:

- Exhibit A. DD Form 149, dated 11 Sep 97, w/atchs.
- Exhibit B. Applicant's Master Personnel Records.
- Exhibit C. Letter, AFPC/DPPRA, dated 1 Oct 97.
- Exhibit D. Letter, AFBCMR, dated 20 Oct 97.
- Exhibit E. Letter, Applicant, dated 23 Oct 97.


VAUGHN E. SCHLUNZ
Panel Chair



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON, D. C.

FEB 12 1999

Office of the Assistant Secretary

AFBCMR 97-02750

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHIEF OF STAFF

Having received and considered the recommendation of the Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records and under the authority of Section 1552, Title 10, United States Code (70A Stat 116), it is directed that:

The pertinent military records of the Department of the Air Force relating to [REDACTED] be corrected to show that he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for extraordinary achievement while participating as a Navigator in a group daylight low level attack against the strongly fortified enemy stronghold of Iwo Jima on 17 February 1945.


JOE G. LINEBERGER
Director
Air Force Review Boards Agency